



UNITED STATES
MILITARY RETIREES ASSOCIATION KOREA
PSC 450 BOX 514
APO AP 96206-0514

July 20, 1998

Mr. Frank Downing
Great Falls, MT

Dear Mr. Downing,

I visited Mrs. Dave Downing today to see how she's getting along, and she showed me your letter to Dave. I don't know if it arrived in time for Dave to read it, but I thought it might be appropriate for me to write, since Dave's wife is not very proficient in even spoken English.

I met Dave for the first time last December. He was the Secretary of the retirees association (above), but his health problems were making the job more and more difficult. As a result, I replaced Dave as Secretary, and then opened a Retiree Activities Office at Osan Air Base, south of Seoul. In this role, I worked very closely with Dave in his efforts to help retirees and widows of retirees here in Korea. We mostly spoke on the phone, but I tried to visit him at least once a month. The last time I saw Dave was on June 29th, when the USFK Retiree Council presented Dave with a "Commander's Award for Public Service." Following the meeting, Dave and I visited several offices, continuing to try to improve the lot of retirees and widows. I spoke to Dave on July 3rd, and his weak voice immediately told me he was having problems. I thought it was a temporary problem caused by the stress of attending the meeting and visiting the offices. But, I guess the strain was more than I imagined, as Dave passed away the following evening.

I don't know how much Dave spoke with you about his work here. In Korea, Dave Downing is a legend. Since 1977, he has been helping people who had nowhere else to turn for help. And in the case of Korean widows, even the little help available was shrouded in U.S. government "bureaucratese" language, hard even for us native Americans to understand. Dave's patience, kindness and ceaseless efforts on behalf of these folks saved many from the "wolf at the door." Did Dave send you a copy of the newspaper article about his work, featured in the October 31 issue of the Yongsan Army Garrison newspaper, "Seoul Word"? If not, I would be happy to send it, together with the citation read with the "Commander's Award for Public Service" and the biographical sketch provided at the memorial service. In summary, all I can say is that Dave "did the Downing name proud," and he is remembered fondly by hundreds, probably thousands, of people whose lives he touched.

I am trying to follow in Dave's footsteps, and today I picked up the binders in which he kept all of the important information on details of working with the Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Defense Finance and Accounting Service. It is truly amazing to see the detailed record of individual concern Dave had for each and every person. He had annotations to remind widows to apply for Social Security when they turn 60, and I found notes to contact such-and-such a widow in the year 2015 to remind her. He had notes about claiming benefits for the children, including details of how and where to apply for

benefits as the child reached age 18 and exact instructions on how to complete the form. It is obvious that Dave truly cared for people, and you and other members of the family should be proud of the legacy he left here in Korea.

I will be remaining in touch with Mrs. Downing to ensure that she gets the same type of help that Dave provided to other widows. If there is anything I can do to assist in any way, communicating with Dave's widow or anything else, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am enclosing my card. If you respond, please use my personal address on the card, rather than the one above. In closing, please accept my sincerest condolences to you and the other members of the family on the loss of Dave. He is alive in the hearts and minds of hundreds of people here whom he touched. I will do everything in my power to keep reminding those people that their lives would be much less had Dave Downing not been here.

With warm regards,

JACK TERWIEL
Secretary